

May 9, 2007

CLARK COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

LOCAL/STATE BOARD FACILITIES HEARING REPORT

Two local/state hearings were held at the Strode Station Elementary School on April 23, 2007 and May 7, 2007. Both hearings began at 6:00 p.m. (Local time). The purpose of the hearings was to propose a new District Facility Plan developed by the Clark County Local Planning Committee. The Local Planning Committee (LPC) voted 10-1 in favor of the proposed new plan and the Board voted 3-2 to approve the new plan.

There were (2) two individuals in attendance. Doug Christopher, LPC Vice Chair, served as the locally-appointed hearing officer. Dr. Musgrove, Superintendent, and Paul Christy, Central Office Staff, were present.

COMMENTS

Dr. Musgrove called the public hearing to order. The hearing officer outlined the purpose of the hearing procedures in accordance with 702 KAR 1:001. It was explained that those persons wishing to speak would be given the opportunity and that written statements would be accepted. It was also noted that all considerations will be made available to the Kentucky Board of Education via the hearing officer's report. The hearing officer provided copies of the proposed new District Facility Plan to all attendees that includes: **construction of a new high school, including a new technology center, to replace George Rogers Clark (GRC) High School; conversion of GRC to a middle school; construction of a new elementary school to replace Central Elementary School; conversion of Conkwright and Clark Middle Schools to elementary schools; conversion of Hannah McClure Elementary School to a preschool center; and closure of Pilot View, Trapp, Providence, and Fannie Bush Elementary Schools.**

The floor was opened to those who wished to make a statement. Thirty-four people spoke at the first hearing and sixty-three people spoke at the second hearing. These totals include ten people who spoke at both hearings. Twenty-four of the people who spoke expressed general opposition to the plan without making specific comments. **Copies of the proceedings are available at the Division of Facilities Management and at the district's website at <http://ilearn.clarkschools.net/sites/webcast>** Comments opposing specific parts of the proposed plan from the remainder of those folks who spoke may be categorized as follows:

a. Desire to Keep Small Elementary Schools Open (36 comments) - Eighteen of these comments were made in a general sense that small schools provide a better overall environment for children. Eight comments were that small schools produce higher test scores; seven comments related to a sense of community that small schools produce in rural areas; and three comments expressed concern with closed buildings not being used for other purposes.

b. Cost of the Plan (14 comments) - Four comments stated opposition to the growth nickel tax increase; seven were concerned that the district could not afford the plan's overall cost; and three expressed concern that the district would be unable to meet future growth needs because the plan consumed the district's bonding capacity for the next twenty years.

c. Size of the Middle School (12 comments) - Six of these were general comments that the proposed middle school was too big and the remaining six comments expressed concerns that student safety and behavior problems would increase and student involvement would decrease if all middle school students were located on the current GRC campus.

d. Transportation Issues (12 comments) - There were two general concerns that the plan would make transportation issues worse, five specific concerns with length of bus rides, and five concerns that the plan would increase transportation costs.

e. Local Planning Committee (11 comments) Operations - There were four comments questioning the LPC's composition, three comments that the LPC had placed too much emphasis on equity, two general comments expressing opposition to how the committee made its decisions, one comment that the LPC needed to do more research on how the plan would impact academic performance and district operating budget costs, and one comment that the LPC needed to develop a consensus with those opposed to the plan.

f. Size of the High School (9 comments) - Five comments expressed concern that the new high school was too big (which would increase discipline and safety problems) and four comments questioned the plan's new high school student capacity and square footage figures listed on the plan.

g. General Concerns (16 comments) - General overall comments included: public is against this plan (6 comments); district needs smaller teacher to student ratios (3 comments); this plan does not address academic needs of our children (2 comments); current Hannah McClure building is not big enough to be a preschool center (1 comment); Strodes Station/Clark Middle traffic access (1 comment); plan is too drastic a change (1 comment); plan favors architects and builders (1 comment); and relocating sports complexes is too costly (1 comment).

In addition to comments opposing specific parts of the plan, there were also twenty-six comments expressing support for other options as follows:

a. Have two small high schools (9 comments).

b. Move 6th grade back to elementary level and convert middle schools to junior high schools (5 comments).

c. Renovate old buildings (5 comments).

d. Use increased tax revenue for general fund operations (3 comments).

e. Move freshmen out of GRC and convert GRC to senior high school (2 comments).

f. Bus kids from city to county schools to equalize student populations (2 comments).

My review of these comments reveals that the issues and concerns raised during these two public hearings have either been discussed or considered by the Local Planning Committee during previous public forums and committee meetings or were issues outside the scope of this committee.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the new District Facility Plan developed by the Clark County Local Planning Committee and adopted by the Clark County Board of Education be approved as the District Facility Plan for the Clark County School District. A copy of the new plan is attached.

Respectfully submitted,

Reviewed by:

Doug Christopher, Hearing Officer

Timothy K. Lucas, KDE Fac. Mgmt.

cc: Mark W. Ryles, Director
Planning File

Att.: Clark County School District Facility Plan